

which I introduced yesterday and which will recognize the importance labor unions play by ensuring a strong middle class by advocating for more equitable wages, humane working conditions, improved benefits and increased civic engagement of everyday citizens—the 99 percent. Ninety-nine Members cosponsored this resolution, and I'm proud to introduce it.

Unions have pioneered benefits such as paid health care and pensions and have helped strengthen access to the American dream by helping to establish government policies and efforts such as family leave, minimum wage, and Social Security. Unions have also been effective in supporting immigrant rights, trade policy, health care and living wage legislation.

Unions have been the voice for everyday Americans—from consumer protections to health, safety, and civil rights. The labor movement has fought to allow workers to negotiate on more equal footing with their employers, providing for a healthy, balanced workplace.

Unions benefit everyone, members and nonmembers. According to the Economic Policy Institute, if more of the 66 million American workers who want to join a union could join one tomorrow, their paychecks and benefits would increase, but so would millions of others. The union premium, as it's called, succeeds in lifting wages of non-union employees in the same industries while not being a deterring factor of the State's economic or its growth record.

Unfortunately, there has been a decline in union membership, due largely to unfair labor practices and scare tactics by union-busting employers. Between 1999 and 2007, more than 86,000 workers filed unfair labor practice claims with the NLRB for being illegally fired by their employer for union activity.

As a result of such efforts to weaken unions, among other things, our economy continues to suffer and the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen, undermining the foundation of the American middle class. Contrary to the belief of union bashers, unions do not increase unemployment or reduce job opportunities. Rather, there are a great deal of facts that correlate the strength of the economy and the middle class to the growth or decline of union membership.

Further, a recent report from the Congressional Budget Office also infers the impact that union membership decline has had on our economy and wealth distribution. The report found that from 1979 to 2007, average inflation-adjusted after tax income grew by 275 percent for the 1 percent of the population with the highest income. For those in the top 20 percent of the population, average real income grew only by 65 percent. However, the bottom fifth rose only by 18 percent. Three-fifths of the people are in the middle, and they grew by 40 percent. So that is

not an equal distribution of growth wealth.

The Wall Street Journal has stated “the main reason U.S. companies are reluctant to step up hiring is scant demand.” Demand is scarce because wages are stagnant while profits are up. The chief investment officer at JPMorgan Chase states: “U.S. labor compensation is now at a 50-year low relative to both company sales and U.S. GDP.” While wages are down, profit margins are up.

Let me ask you to support this legislation. We will continue to stand on the steps of Ohio, march in the streets of New Jersey, in our neighborhoods. I, in addition to the 99 Members of the House who support this bill, we urge its passage.

#### FINDING COMMON GROUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk about the partisanship and venom in Washington this year. And while we will certainly see fierce debates in the future, I believe Members of this body can still come together and find common ground.

On the surface, my colleague HANSEN CLARKE and I are very different. He is a lawyer representing the city of Detroit with a liberal voting record. I'm a conservative physician representing rural northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. We are both new to this House and share an interest in learning more about the unique challenges facing Michigan's citizens. After meeting HANSEN during freshman orientation, we agreed to tour each other's district.

In August I had the opportunity to head down to Michigan's 13th District in Detroit. There we toured employers such as Edward C. Levy Company and Mercy Primary Care Center and got to have some lunch on Mack Avenue. It was great to learn more about the district and be back in Detroit where I did my medical training. Next week Congressman CLARKE will tour with me in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. We will be meeting with area employers in Marquette and Escanaba, and will be getting a chance to see the splendor of Lake Superior with a visit to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Munising. I hope HANSEN will even get to try one of northern Michigan's famous pasties for lunch.

Mr. Speaker, although HANSEN and I are from different parties and dramatically different parts of the State, we are united in the goal of improving economic conditions in the great State of Michigan. We believe that neither party has a monopoly on good ideas, and by working together, we can help shape a better future for our children and grandchildren.

Despite our difference of opinion on many issues, we both recognize that America remains a place in the world

like no other, and that with liberty, courage, and hard work, there is no limit to one's destiny. I encourage all Members of this Chamber to pair up and schedule a visit to a different district.

Congressman CLARKE, I'm honored to have you as my friend, and I look forward to having you in Upper Michigan next week.

#### WORKING TOGETHER TO SERVE AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CLARKE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLARKE of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman BENISHEK for that wonderful invitation for me to visit your district. Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, it's one of the most beautiful areas you can ever see in the country. It has delicious food and great people. I know I'm going to have a wonderful time. But also, too, my visit to northern Michigan will help DAN and I have another set of common experiences that we can use to help serve our people together.

With his area in northern Michigan and with the area that I'm hired to represent, metropolitan Detroit, we can focus on the common needs of our people. Let me give you an example. When Representative BENISHEK visited the east side of Detroit with me this past summer, we found out we had a lot of things in common. I'm born and raised on the east side. Well, he actually lived on the east side when he attended one of the finest medical schools in the country, Wayne State Medical School in the city of Detroit.

We visited several places, but in particular we visited the Mercy Primary Care Center. This is a health clinic located right in the heart of Detroit. Firsthand, we were able to hear from and see the challenges that many of our veterans are facing. Our veterans—these were young men and women who, because of their loyalty to our country, were sent overseas. They risked their lives. They risked their mental and emotional well-being. Many of them came back to Detroit only to face a place where they can't even find a job. They can't even find a home. They are out on the street with no place to live. No one should have to live in that type of indignity.

Representative BENISHEK, as a physician and as a Member of the House committee that oversees the Department of Veterans Affairs, he wanted to work with me to better serve these veterans. So he and I are now working together with the Department of Veterans Affairs to better provide shelter, health care, and training to these homeless veterans in the city of Detroit. This is an example of how Republicans and Democrats can work together to help our people.

And you know what? It's not really that hard for he and I to work together. The folks that he represents